

Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel Claims 13, 15, and 26. Please amend Claims 1, 11, 22, 25, 27, 28, 36, 42 and 58. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing

1. (Currently amended) A modular in-the-ear-type hearing aid comprising:
 - a base unit adapted to contain any of a microphone, a receiver, a battery, electronics and controls, and wherein the base unit can be replaced after use; and
 - an earmold removably attached to the base unit, the earmold comprising a compliant material and having a shorter useful life than the useful life of the base unit, the earmold further comprising a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use on a more frequent basis than the replacement of the base unit, the earmold adapted to contain a hearing aid component non-removably integrated within the earmold.
2. (Previously presented) A modular hearing aid comprising:
 - a base unit adapted to contain any of a microphone, a receiver, electronics and controls; and
 - an earmold removably attached to the base unit, the earmold comprising a compliant material, a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use, and the earmold comprising a battery non-removably integrated with the earmold.
3. (Previously presented) The modular hearing aid of Claim 2 wherein the earmold further comprises a shell non-removably integrated with the earmold, the shell housing the battery.
4. (Previously presented) A modular hearing aid comprising:
 - a base unit adapted to contain any of a microphone, electronics and controls; and

an earmold removably attached to the base unit, the earmold comprising a compliant material, a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use, and the earmold comprising both a battery and a receiver non-removably integrated with the earmold.

5. (Previously presented) The modular hearing aid of Claim 4 wherein the earmold further comprises a shell non-removably integrated with the earmold, the shell housing the battery and the receiver.
6. (Previously presented) A modular hearing aid comprising:
 - a base unit adapted to contain any of a microphone, a battery, electronics and controls; and
 - an earmold removably attached to the base unit, the earmold comprising a compliant material, a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use, and the earmold comprising a receiver and a shell, the shell non-removably integrated with the earmold and the receiver housed within the shell.
7. (Original) The modular hearing aid of Claim 6 wherein the receiver is integrated with the earmold.
8. (Original) The modular hearing aid of Claim 1 wherein the earmold forms an earmold tip for attachment to a distal end of the base unit.
9. (Original) The modular hearing aid of Claim 1 wherein the earmold forms an earmold sleeve for attachment to at least a portion of the base unit.
10. (Original) The modular hearing aid of Claim 1 wherein the earmold forms an earmold tip and an earmold sleeve for attachment to the base unit.

11. (Currently amended) A modular hearing aid comprising:
 - a base unit adapted to contain any of a microphone, a receiver, a battery and controls;
 - an earmold removably attached to the base unit, the earmold comprising a compliant material and comprising a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use;
 - a receiver mounted in at least one of the base unit and the earmold; and
 - a module comprising a shell and electronics, the module removably connected to the earmold, ~~and removably connected to the base unit,~~ and the receiver such that the module can be disconnected from the base unit, ~~and the earmold,~~ and the receiver and replaced after use.
12. (Original) The modular hearing aid of Claim 11 wherein the earmold further comprises a battery removably attached to the earmold.
13. (Cancelled)
14. (Original) The modular hearing aid of Claim 11 wherein the earmold further comprises a battery integrated with the earmold.
15. (Cancelled)
16. (Original) The modular hearing aid of Claim 14 wherein the module further comprises a microphone.
17. (Original) The modular hearing aid of Claim 11 wherein the earmold forms an earmold tip for attachment to a distal end of the base unit.

18. (Original) The modular hearing aid of Claim 11 wherein the earmold forms an earmold sleeve for attachment to at least a portion of the base unit.
19. (Original) The modular hearing aid of Claim 11 wherein the earmold forms an earmold tip and an earmold sleeve for attachment to the base unit.
20. (Previously presented) A modular hearing aid comprising:
 - a base unit adapted to contain a microphone, a receiver, electronics and controls;
 - and
 - an earmold comprising a compliant material non-removably integrated with a battery, the earmold having a flexible, mushroom shaped earmold tip adapted to create a seal with the bony portion of the ear canal to acoustically isolate the hearing aid base unit from acoustical vibrations created by the receiver, the earmold tip further comprising a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use.
21. (Previously presented) A modular hearing aid comprising:
 - a base unit adapted to contain a microphone and electronics; and
 - an earmold comprising a compliant material non-removably integrated with a battery and a receiver, the earmold having a flexible, mushroom shaped earmold tip adapted to create a seal with the bony portion of the ear canal to acoustically isolate the hearing aid base unit from acoustical vibrations created by the receiver, the earmold tip further comprising a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use.
22. (Currently amended) A method for replacing an earmold of a modular in-the-ear-type hearing aid comprising the steps:

providing a modular hearing aid having a base unit and a compliant earmold having a shorter useful life than the useful life of the base unit, the earmold adapted to contain a hearing aid component non-removably integrated within the earmold;

releasing a securing mechanism between the earmold and the base unit, the securing mechanism capable of being released by a user without the use of a separate tool or instrument;

removing the earmold from the base unit;

discarding the earmold;

placing a second earmold onto the base unit; and

attaching the securing mechanism.

23. (Canceled).

24. (Canceled).

25. (Currently amended) A flexible earmold tip for a hearing aid comprising:

a vibration isolator portion adapted for attachment to a hearing aid, the vibration isolator portion having a receiver disposed therein and wherein the receiver includes a diaphragm adapted to vibrate in operation creating acoustical vibrations which cause the receiver to mechanically vibrate and wherein the vibration isolation portion attenuates such mechanical vibrations from the receiver; and

a mushroom shaped tip portion for insertion into an ear canal, the mushroom shaped tip portion attached to and integral with the vibration isolator portion.

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Currently amended) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 26 25 wherein the mushroom shaped tip portion creates a seal with an ear canal to acoustically isolate a hearing aid base unit from the acoustical vibrations.

28. (Currently amended) The flexible earmold tip of Claim ~~26~~ 25 further comprising a sound bore coupling the vibration isolator portion to the mushroom shaped tip portion.
29. (Original) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 28 wherein the sound bore comprises a spring and a compliant material surrounding the sound bore wherein the spring prevents collapsing of the sound bore and controls the flexibility of the flexible earmold tip.
30. (Original) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 25 wherein the flexible earmold tip further comprises an outlet port which allows collection of earwax without clogging the sound bore.
31. (Original) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 25 wherein the vibration isolation portion mechanically decouples the receiver from a hearing aid base unit to isolate the mechanical vibrations of the receiver from the base unit.
32. (Original) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 25 wherein the hearing aid includes a base unit in which is mounted a microphone.
33. (Original) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 25 wherein the hearing aid includes a base unit in which is mounted a microphone and the vibration isolation portion comprises a nest in which the receiver sits to acoustically seal the receiver within the vibration isolation portion thereby acoustically isolating the base unit from the acoustical vibrations created by the receiver.
34. (Original) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 25 wherein the vibration isolator portion partially covers the receiver.
35. (Original) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 34 further comprising an adhesive wherein the adhesive secures and acoustically seals the receiver to the earmold.

36. (Currently amended) A hearing aid comprising:
a hearing aid base unit having a microphone, a battery and electronics; and
a flexible earmold tip comprising a compliant material and having a vibration isolator portion containing a receiver, a mushroom shaped tip portion adapted to create a seal with an ear canal to acoustically isolate the hearing aid base unit from acoustical vibrations created by the receiver, and a sound bore, the vibration isolator portion enclosed by the base unit and having the receiver electrically attached to the base unit wherein the receiver includes a diaphragm adapted to vibrate in operation causing the receiver to mechanically vibrate and wherein the vibration isolation portion attenuates vibrations from the receiver, the mushroom shaped tip portion being attached to and integral with the vibration isolator portion, and the sound bore formed between the vibration isolator portion and the mushroom shaped tip portion and the sound bore providing a channel for the transfer of sound from the receiver to an ear canal of a user.
37. (Original) The hearing aid of Claim 36 wherein the sound bore comprises a spring and a compliant material surrounding the sound bore wherein the spring prevents collapsing of the sound bore and controls the flexibility of the flexible earmold tip.
38. (Original) The hearing aid of Claim 36 wherein the flexible earmold tip further comprises an outlet port which allows collection of earwax without clogging the sound bore.
39. (Original) The hearing aid of Claim 36 wherein the vibration isolation portion mechanically decouples the receiver from the base unit to isolate the mechanical vibrations of the receiver from the base unit.
40. (Canceled).
41. (Original) The hearing aid of Claim 36 wherein the vibration isolation portion comprises a nest in which the receiver sits to acoustically seal the receiver within the vibration

isolation portion thereby acoustically isolating the base unit from acoustical vibrations created by the receiver.

42. (Currently amended) A method for attenuating feedback in a hearing aid comprising:
providing a hearing aid base unit, a receiver, and a flexible hearing aid tip comprising a compliant material, the hearing aid tip having a flexible mushroom shaped tip portion and vibration isolator portion, the flexible mushroom shaped tip portion being integrally formed with the vibration isolator portion;
surrounding the receiver with the vibration isolator portion to attenuate acoustic vibrations and mechanical vibrations created by the receiver during operation;
securing the vibration isolator portion and receiver within the hearing aid base unit; and
placing the hearing aid within an ear such that the mushroom shaped tip portion creates a seal with the bony portion of the ear canal to acoustically isolate the hearing aid base unit from acoustical vibrations created by the receiver.
43. (Canceled).
44. (Previously presented) A disposable hearing aid comprising:
a base unit having an inside portion, the base unit adapted to contain a non-replaceable component, including any of a microphone, a receiver, a battery, electronics and controls; and
a potting material which pots at least a portion of the inside portion of the base unit, wherein the material increases the mass of the hearing aid and wherein the material attenuates vibrations created by the receiver during operation.
45. (Canceled).
46. (Previously presented) A disposable hearing aid comprising:

a base unit having an inside portion, the base unit adapted to contain a non-replaceable component, including any of a microphone, a receiver, a battery, electronics and controls; and

a potting material which pots at least a portion of the inside portion of the base unit, wherein the material increases the mass of the hearing aid and wherein the material attenuates vibrations created by the receiver during operation, wherein the potting material forms an acoustical barrier inside the hearing aid between the receiver and the microphone.

47. (Previously presented) A method for reducing feedback in a disposable hearing aid comprising:

providing a hearing aid having an inside portion adapted to contain a non-replaceable component, including any of a microphone, a receiver, a battery, electronics and controls;

potting at least a portion of the inside portion of the hearing aid with a material, thereby increasing the mass of the hearing aid;

attenuating vibrations created by the receiver during operation through the increased mass of the hearing aid; and

reducing feedback in the hearing aid by attenuating vibrations created by the receiver.

48. (Previously presented) A disposable hearing aid comprising:

a hearing aid portion wherein the hearing aid portion comprises a shell containing a battery, a receiver, a microphone and electronics;

a flexible core attached to the hearing aid portion, the flexible core forming a sound bore, thereby allowing sound produced by the hearing aid portion to travel to the ear canal; and

a compliant tip portion adapted to be inserted into an ear canal, wherein the tip portion comprises layers of fingers surrounding the flexible core and wherein the fingers are adapted to bend, twist, and interleave to form an acoustic seal in the ear canal.

49. (Canceled).
50. (Previously presented) The disposable hearing aid of Claim 48 wherein the layers of fingers comprise an elastomer material.
51. (Previously presented) A disposable hearing aid comprising:
a hearing aid portion wherein the hearing aid portion comprises a shell containing a battery, a receiver, a microphone and electronics;
a flexible core attached to the hearing aid portion, the flexible core forming a sound bore, thereby allowing sound produced by the hearing aid portion to travel to the ear canal; and
a compliant tip portion adapted to be inserted into an ear canal, wherein the tip material comprises a fluid-filled bladder surrounding the flexible core.
52. (Original) The disposable hearing aid of Claim 51 wherein the fluid-filled bladder comprises air within the bladder.
53. (Original) The disposable hearing aid of Claim 51 wherein the fluid-filled bladder comprises liquid within the bladder.
54. (Original) The disposable hearing aid of Claim 51 wherein the fluid-filled bladder further comprises a flexible bladder wall to allow for flexibility of the fluid-filled bladder to accommodate size changes within the ear canal.
- 55-57. (Canceled).
58. (Currently amended) A flexible earmold tip for a hearing aid adapted for attachment to a hearing aid comprising:
a flexible compliant material forming the tip; and

a receiver in the tip which includes a diaphragm adapted to vibrate in operation creating acoustical vibrations.

59. (Previously presented) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 58 having a mushroom shape enclosing the receiver.
60. (Previously presented) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 58 wherein the diaphragm vibrates in response to an electrical signals coupled to the receiver from a microphone source external to the tip.
61. (Previously presented) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 58 wherein the flexible earmold tip further comprises an outlet port which allows collection of earwax without clogging the sound bore.
62. (Previously presented) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 60 wherein the hearing aid includes a base unit having the microphone source.
63. (Previously presented) The flexible earmold tip of Claim 60 having a nest in which the receiver sits to acoustically seal the receiver within the tip thereby acoustically isolating the base unit from any acoustical vibrations created by the receiver.